

The Silent Majority: Physicians' Attitudes toward Restrictive Abortion Policies in Battleground Wisconsin

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Under-Examined Physician Role in State-Level Abortion Policy

- Physicians are trusted public figures and a critical public health workforce
- 25% of U.S. pregnancies end in abortion, but abortion policy is often omitted from research on physician attitudes and their potential policy influence
- Physician attitudes may be especially important at the state level, where restrictions already significantly curtail abortion access

Methods: Cross-Sectional Survey

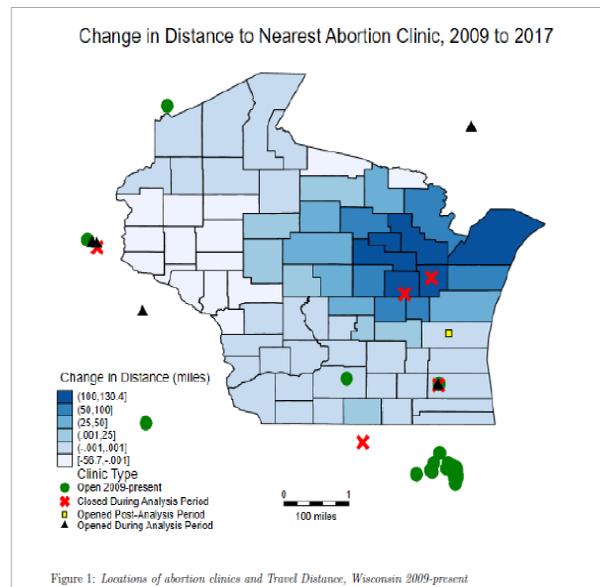
- Cross-sectional, web and mail, 45-question survey assessed physician abortion knowledge, attitudes, and practices
- Fielded to every practicing physician faculty member at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health
- Best-practice survey methodologies to increase participation led to a 67% response rate

Response Rate and Respondents

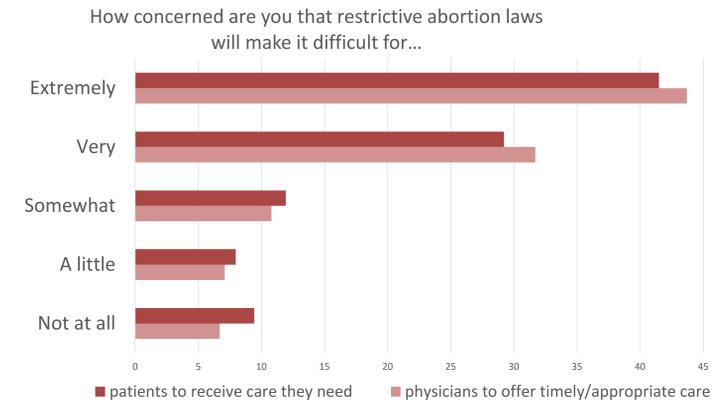
- 913 clinical faculty completed the survey (adjusted response rate=67%)
- Over 20 medical specialties represented
- 94% of respondents care for women of reproductive age in their practice

Wisconsin an Apt Setting

- Sea-change, 2010 state election led to implementation of multiple abortion restrictions, making Wisconsin one of the most restrictive environments in U.S.
- Catholic hospital penetration is high in Wisconsin, limiting abortion provider pipeline
- These factors and others contributed to the closure of 60% of the state's abortion care facilities between 2009-2017

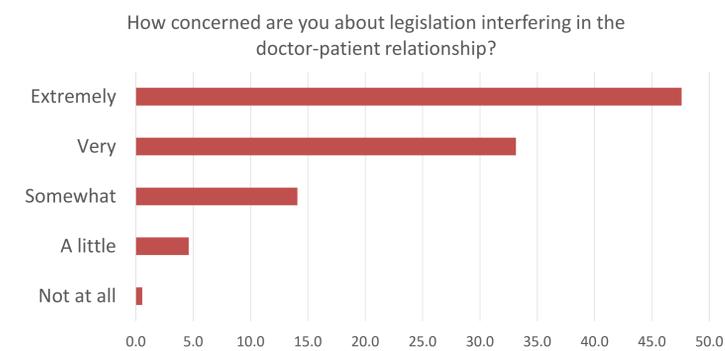


Findings: Overwhelming Concern about Restrictive Abortion Policies

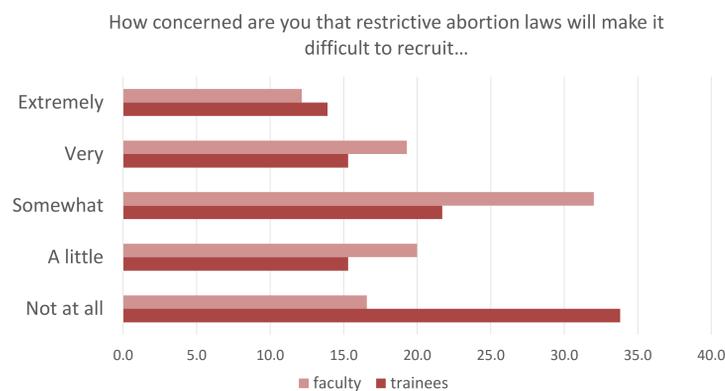


Less than 10% were unconcerned that restrictive abortion laws make it difficult for patients to receive care they need or physicians to offer timely care

91% said women's healthcare in Wisconsin would get worse if *Roe v. Wade* is overturned (not shown graphically)



99% were at least a little concerned about legislation interfering in the doctor-patient relationship.



Over 4-in-5 (83%) expressed at least some concern that restrictive abortion laws would make it difficult to recruit faculty

Two-thirds (66%) were worried about effects on trainee recruitment

Main Takeaway

In an abortion-restrictive landscape, physicians across medical specialties at the state's largest medical school expressed concern about effects of abortion restrictions on women's health, the provider-patient relationship, and the reputation of their institution

Given both APHA and AMA opposition to abortion restrictions, these physician attitudes could be better leveraged to change policies and public perceptions, particularly in battleground states.